

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, SP

SUBJECT: RIFT IN THE BASQUE STV TRADE UNION

REF: (A) EC BRUSSELS 8982 (NOTAL), (B) MADRID 4825 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: THE RIFT IN THE BASQUE STV HAS BECOME ACCENTUATED AS LEUNDA'S TRADITIONAL GROUP AND BEITIA'S YOUNG TURKS VIE FOR SUPPORT IN COMPETING CONGRESSES. NOTWITHSTANDING THE QUESTIONABLE SHOCK TACTICS THEY ARE EMPLOYING, THE YOUNG TURKS APPEAR TO HAVE DEALT A BLOW TO THE OLD GUARD, AND MAY BE A FORCE TO RECKON WITH IN BASQUE LABOR.

1. WE MUCH APPRECIATE EC BRUSSEL'S REFTTEL A. CONCERNING THE COMING VISIT OF THE "TRADITIONAL" STV (SOLIDARITY OF BASQUE WORKERS) LEADERS TO BRUSSELS THIS WEEK, AND CONCUR IN PLURALISM POLICY CITED.

2. THE STV DISSIDENT YOUNG TURK FACTION HELD WHAT THEY CHARACTERIZED AS A "MODERATELY SUCCESSFUL" EXTRAORDINARY CONGRESS IN BILBAO ON JULY 31- AUG 1. IT WAS ATTENDED BY SOME 600 DELEGATES AND 200 OBSERVERS, INCLUDING TESSIER (FRENCH

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CFTC), PAUL ALETS (BELGIAN FEB), CRISTINE CHAUVET (FRENCH

REPUBLICAINS INDEPENDENTS), MIKE ORRANTIA (CNT, BASQUE REGION), BENJAMIN BERNART (CNT, CATALONIA REGION, AND FRANCESC MARTI (PARTIT SOCIALISTA DE CATALUNYA), WHO ALL ADDRESSED THE CONGRESS. THERE WERE NO AMERICAN OBSERVERS, ALTHOUGH THE FOLLOWING SENT FRATERNAL GREETINGS (SOME PERHAPS IN THE BELIEF THEY WERE CONGRATULATING THE TRADITIONAL STV GROUP): AFSCME (AMERICAN FEDERATION OF STATE, COUNTY AND MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEES), ASSOCIATED ACTORS AND ARTISTS OF AMERICA, UNITED ASSN OF PLUMBING JOURNEYMEN AND APPRENTICES, BROTHERHOOD OF RAILWAY, AIRLINE AND STEAMSHIP CLERKS, RETAIL CLERKS INT'L ASSN, SENATOR FRANK CHURCH, AND SENATOR PAUL LAXALT. JUAN BEITIA AND FRANCISCO JAVIER FRESNEDO (PRINCIPAL STV YOUNG TURK LEADERS) WERE ELECTED TO A SIX-MAN EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

3. SECRETARY GENERAL JOSE MIGUEL LEUNDA OF THE TRADITIONAL STV GROUP SUBSEQUENTLY BLASTED THE YOUNG TURK CONGRESS, AND CONDEMNED THE USURPATION OF THE OFFICIAL STV LETTERHEAD SHOWING AFFILIATION WITH ICFTU, WCL, AND IMF. ACCORDING TO AMCONSULATE BILBAO, SOME BASQUES ARE DISTRESSED AT THE CHALLENGE TO THE "LEGITIMATE" LEADERSHIP AND CHARGE THE BEITIA INSURGENTS ARE A CAT'S PAW OF THE BASQUE INDUSTRIAL HIERARCHY. OTHERS HOWEVER, APPARENTLY WELCOME THEIR NON-ALIGNED POLITICAL POSTURE AND EMPHATIC ANTI-COMMUNISM, AND CONSIDER THEM AS COHERENT ADVOCATES OF AN ORIENTATION WITHIN THE STV THAT HAS EXISTED SINCE THE EARLY SIXTIES.

4. ACCORDING TO PRIVATE INFORMATION PROVIDED AMCONSULATE BILBAO AND THE EMBASSY, THE TRADITIONAL STV GROUP APPEARS TO HAVE DECIDED ON SHORT NOTICE TO SPLIT THEIR PLANNED CONGRESS INTO TWO SESSIONS. THUS, THEY HELD A SUDDENLY-CALLED "MINI-CONGRESS" ON AUG. 16-21 IN EUBA, NEAR BILBAO, ATTENDED BY SOME 150 PARTICIPANTS. THE 83-YEAR OLD ROBLES ARANGUIZ WAS RE-ELECTED PRESIDENT, WHILE JOSE LEUNDA AND ECHEVARRIA (FIRST NAME UNKNOWN) WERE ELECTED VICE PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY GENERAL RESPECTIVELY. THE MEETING SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN IN EFFECT A RELATIVELY SMALL WORKING SESSION TO PREPARE FOR THE OFFICIAL STV CONGRESS PLANNED FOR SOMETIME IN OCT. (SEE REFTELS). ACCORDING TO SOME REPORTS, THE MEETING TURNED OUT TO BE A DIVISIVE ONE WITH SOME DELEGATES WALKING OUT. THE WALKOUT APPEARED TO HAVE BEEN PROMPTED BY 1) DISAGREEMENT OVER THE DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES (STRONGLY ANTI-CAPITALISTIC AND CONSIDERED BY SOME LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AS CONTRARY IN TONE TO THE STV'S TRADITIONAL ALLIANCE WITH THE BASQUE NATIONALIST PNV PARTY) AND 2) OBJECTIONS TO THE APPARENT ATTEMPT TO MAKE THE STV OCT. CONGRESS A "RUBBER STAMP OPERATION."

5. COMMENT. NOTWITHSTANDING THE QUESTIONABLE SHOCK TACTICS BEING EMPLOYED AGAINST THE "OFFICIAL" AND TRADITIONAL STV HIERARCHY, THE STV YOUNG TURKS APPEAR TO HAVE DEALT A BLOW TO THE ROBLES/LEUNDA OLD GUARD. THE EFFECTIVE STRENGTH OF THE

SEVERAL STV FACTIONS (AT LEAST THREE) IS NOT KNOWN AFTER SO MANY YEARS OF FURTIVE UNDERGROUND OPERATION, BUT THE BEITIA GROUP IS PROJECTING AN ACTIVIST IMAGE THROUGH EFFECTIVE ORGANIZATION DRIVES AND PARTICULARLY IMPRESSIVE CONTACTS WITH LOCAL BASQUE CULTURAL ASSOCIATIONS AND NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION COMMITTEES IN BILBAO'S HEAVILY INDUSTRIALIZED LEFT BANK WORKING CLASS DISTRICT.

6. SINCE THE QUESTION OF LEGITIMACY IS UNDECIDED, AND SINCE STRONG TIES EXIST BETWEEN THE LEUNDA GROUP AND THE AFL-CIO, IT WILL OBVIOUSLY BE DIFFICULT FOR THE BEITIA FACTION TO ENJOY THE RELATIONSHIP THEY OPENLY SEEK WITH THE AMERICAN LABOR MOVEMENT. AS SUGGESTED IN REFTEL A., THE TRADITIONAL STV GROUP WILL PROBABLY GO ALL OUT TO MAKE A BIG SPLASH AT THEIR OCT. CONGRESS. THE YOUNG TURKS CAN BE EXPECTED TO TAKE THE LINE THAT A TRADE UNION (READ THE LEUNDA GROUP) CANNOT BE BASED ONLY ON "EMPTY INT'L CONTACTS." IN AS MUCH AS THE BEITIAL GROUP COULD EVENTUALLY TURN OUT TO BE THE MAINSTREAM STV GROUP AFTER THE SMOKE CLEARS, THEY MAY BE A FORCE TO RECKON WITH IN BASQUE LABOR.

7. ACTION REQUESTED PARIS: BEITIA HAS ASKED WHETHER AFL-CIO'S IRVING BROWN WOULD BE WILLING TO MEET WITH HIM IN PARIS (OR ELSEWHERE) IN ORDER THAT BEITIA MIGHT EXPLAIN "THEIR SIDE OF THE STORY" REGARDING THE STV SPLIT. WE MAKE NO RECOMMENDATION, BUT HAVE SET FORTH THE FACTS AS WE UNDERSTAND THEM. WE WOULD APPRECIATE RESPONSE SOONEST.

8. ACTION REQUESTED GENEVA: DITTO ABOVE WITH RESPECT IMF'S HERMAN REBHAN IN GENEVA.
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